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EDITORIAL

WE heard once of a minister who celebrated Christmas during the month of July; he explained to his questioners that he wanted to get away from all the money-making and busyness that goes on during the traditional Christmas season. In the relative peace of that summer month he and his congregation might have a chance to understand and re-experience the real message of Christmas.

Up until that time they, like us, had celebrated a rich Christmas, a busy Christmas, a tight Christmas, and every kind of a Christmas, except a religious Christmas, or, for that matter, a Christian Christmas. And if you look forward to the coming holiday merry-go-round with some anxiety, perhaps you can also understand this desire for a simple and reverent celebration.

It's a little late in the year for us to follow this example, but we heartily second the intent. There is one reason, and only one reason, for Christmas. This reason is the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. His birth marks the beginning of a new era and a new faith and a new religious alternative in the lives of men and nations. We of the Christian community receive this event as the advent of our hope and the foundation of our religious commitment. For us this birth is the central event of the holiday season, and all customs, rites, songs, and interpretations are merely satellites about this body. They enhance and embellish its beauty, but their presence or absence do not change its verity.

If we accept the message of Christ—that God is with us in and through all the acts of history—is it not fitting that we should celebrate his birth and the beginning of the Christian hope? Our holiday, our holy day, is founded on the fact of a birth, not on a private fancy, and is confirmed by the certainty of a life, and not by sentiment.

Needless to say, some Unitarians will find these words strange and meaningless; they may even feel that such a thought is not "Unitarian." These are people who have never been able to come to terms with the Christian gospel and the figure of Jesus, as they appear in the New Testament. And they would regard any Christian understanding of the gospel and Jesus as "illiberal." You can readily see that liberal here takes on the narrow, illiberal meaning of "non-Christian." Such people as well as many with Christian sympathies, cannot wholeheartedly and honestly celebrate Christmas after the manner of the Christian community. And so they celebrate and interpret Christmas in terms of their individual inclinations.

1. Some Unitarian churches will celebrate Christmas along with Hannukah of Judaism and Divali of Hinduism; they will regard it as a particular (in this case Christian) celebration of a universal religious reality. 2. Other churches will celebrate on December 25th the birthdays of many great men—Ghandi, Buddha, Confucius, Lincoln, Moses, Mohammed, Socrates, and Albert Schweitzer, as well as Christ. 3. Yet another church may emphasize in its celebrations the pagan background and accretions of Christmas—gift-giving from the Roman Saturnalia, the Yule-log from the Norse and Saxons, the cosmic symbolism of the winter solstice, and so forth. 4. A new interpretation calls Christmas the world's day of thanksiving for children.

We recognize full well that churches in our fellowship have a right to celebrate Christmas in any way they choose. It is to the glory of our pluralistic tradition that we have a diversity of outlook and interpretation. And we rejoice that they all keep Christmas in one way or another.

At the same time we must be intellectually honest and say this. The above interpretations really have very little to do with Christmas itself, unless we want to throw up our hands and say that Christmas means anything to anybody. 1. Hannakuh and Divali simply do not celebrate

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Why Christmas Came

Carl Bihldorff

There may be books which touch on the subject, Why Christmas Came, but I found none in the library. Of books on Christmas customs, poetry and plays there is an abundance, but when you seek light on the profoundest question the mind can raise concerning Christmas you are directed to the gospel stories in Matthew and Luke, and to that most questionable passage in John which attributes to Jesus the word: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son. . . ."

Of course, in theological libraries there are books which, taking the New Testament texts literally, explain that the birth of Jesus was the fulfilment of ancient prophecy, and that his life and death were essential to our salvation from the sin of Adam. To such writers the challenge of Why Christmas Came is readily solved. But to minds that have approached these stories with a knowledge of modern biblical criticism, the problem of Why Christmas Came is fraught with mystery, wonder and difficulties.

What is Christmas? Historically, it is the day when the birth of Jesus is celebrated. Religiously, it is a day which commemorates the advent—the coming into the world of a life so divine that the ages have called him the Son of God. But when all this is said and acknowledged we have explained almost nothing. Jesus did appear. But why?

I am convinced that Christmas holds in its mystery much more than our orthodox friends have seen. To them it stands for the advent of of a saviour, God's only begotten son, sent to earth to redeem mankind. To us, if we will but open our minds to wisdom, Christmas can reveal answers to some of life's deepest questions and guide our souls in the way of their fulfilment.

Wherever the place and whatever the year in which Jesus was born, we must acknowledge—and this liberal Christians are quite willing to do—that historically Christmas began after the life and not at the birth of Jesus. According to our ablest biblical scholars, the date of Jesus' birth was between 6-4 B.C. And the place of his birth is believed to have been Nazareth. But the year and place of one's birth are not important. The life and work of Albert Schweitzer are now known the world over, but are there among us any who know the date and place of his birth?

Today we honor the birth of Jesus of Nazareth because of what he was, what he stood for, what he revealed. What he was, stood for, and revealed, the New Testament record read by discerning eyes describes. He revealed that God is love, and he lived a life of love toward his fellow men. His God was no nebulous thing. He was a Father, the loving Father of all mankind. Youthful agnosticism may have clouded some of his days, but he obviously refused to let his search end with a question mark. We may attribute to him a quality of intuition, spiritual awareness, prescient knowledge, divine affinity, or, if you wish, delusion; but whatever conclusion we reach, we cannot escape his conclusion: God is our Father, and we are His children.

In the year 1543 a Polish monk, who had given himself to astronomy, announced to the world a daring theory. We do not know whether the views of Aristarchus of Samos, who lived during the third century B.C., ever reached the ears of this monk, but their conclusions were similar. Though Copernicus had long before arrived at the position for which his name is famous, he withheld publication of his findings for fear of reprisal from the church he loved. Scripture and the church held that the earth is stationary while the heavenly bodies move about it. Through his studies, Copernicus reached the conclusion that the sun, and not the earth, is stationary, and that the planets and stars encircle it. These findings were at length published in his book *De Revolutionibus Orbium,* and so well did he time its appearance that two hours after the first copy reached his hand, he died of natural causes.

Copernicus is remembered and honored today because he revealed something about our solar system that is true: the earth does revolve around the sun. Whatever errors and unsound reasoning his total theory contains, his basic conclusion has been verified time and again.

In raising the question, Why Christmas Came, I find a parallel between Copernicus and Jesus. The Polish monk is honored because he revealed a fact about the earth's relation to the sun which has been confirmed by other men of astronomy.

Jesus is honored at this holy season because his revelation of the love of God and man's divinity have been confirmed in the spiritual experience of the race. I do not mean, of course, that all men have had personal confirmation of his insights. Few of us, intelligent as we are, would be capable of deducing from a study of the heavenly bodies, proof that the earth goes round the sun. We accept this as a fact because of our confidence in astronomers whose observations and mathematical skill have confirmed this conclusion. In the same manner, when ordinary mortals seek confirmation of the insights of one who the brilliant scientist, the late Lecomte du Nouy, said was perhaps a million years in advance of evolution, their search is rarely confirmed through the witness of first hand knowledge.

The simple truth is that most human beings lack the capacity to verify Jesus' insights. This does not mean that all of us are incapable of such development as will lead to confirmation; it means simply that we have not trained ourselves through spiritual discipline to be worthy instruments of such knowledge.

Shall we, out of our own spiritual ineptitude, presume to judge the validity of experiences shared by such giants as Jesus, Paul, Bernard of Clairvaux, Saint Francis, Saint Catherine, Meister Eckhart and a great host of others—past and present—who so lived in attunement with things heavenly that out of their lives came pronouncements which are the glory of our religious heritage?

This is not a sermon on faith, but the spirit moves me to say—distrust your doubts! Open your lives through the power of faith and share this Christmastide the vision and the promise of God's holy love which were revealed in Jesus and in other Christlike lives. Their ecstacy few if any among us have earned the right to share, but through faith we can know some measure of the love and peace that indwelt them.

We do not know when the birth of Jesus was first celebrated in Christian history. One theory suggests it was observed during the reign of Antoninus Pius—136 to 161 A.D.—but this theory has been discredited. It is probable that the nativity of the Christ child did not become a part of our ecclesiastical calendar until the third century, and even then the date varied between January and May.

The thought I am suggesting is that when enough men and women had verified the truth of Jesus' witness to the power of God's love in human life, Christmas was born. It took the collective testimony of generations of seekers to confirm the validity of his revelation. I do not believe we can adequately explain Why Christmas Came without acknowledging our debt to this period of trial, evaluation, and confirmation.

A further explanation of Why Christmas Came must be presented, for we thus far have said nothing of that which preceded, or paved the way, for the coming of Christmas. Had the spirit that was in Jesus been shared among a people other than the Hebrews, there would today be no Christmas. For outside of Palestine there existed no spiritual climate that could have brought to fruition the promise of his thought and revelation. One may well wonder how many christs born in other lands have lived and died unknown because the soil of their birth was unprepared for such heavenly seed. At the time of Jesus' birth, Judaism was the only religion in the world that possessed the capacity—and that by a very narrow margin of safety—to preserve for mankind his message. Christmas came because Jesus was born into the richest spiritual culture of the ancient world. Abraham and Moses had laid the foundation. Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Psalmist, Amos, Micah and Hosea completed the temple in which the voice of the Lord's Anointed could be heard. Nearly two thousand years of preparation preceded his advent. May we never forget our debt to Judaism.

We cannot, however, stop here. If we did, we would be confronted with an interpretation of Christmas that is humanistic in its origin, and earthly in its content. We must go deeper; much deeper.

Behind the fact of Christmas stands that which is its supreme glory. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." Christmas is more than a revelation about God. God broke into the world at Christmas time. No, Jesus was not God, any more than our radios are the creators of melodies they bring to us. But through attunement to the divine spirit, he revealed to us according to his capacity and sensitivity, and he enhanced for us through his human spirit, the wonder, the glory, and the love of God.

In Albert Schweitzer's book, Christianity and the Religions of the World, there stands one of the most illuminating expressions of philosophic wisdom I have ever known. Schweitzer was not

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Jane Addams

by Eva Whiting White

Jane Addams, one of the greatest humanitarians who ever lived, was born in Cedarville, Illinois, in 1860. Her father was a devoted admirer of Abraham Lincoln and a Hicksite Quaker who was said to be a man of means. He was elected 7 times to the Illinois Senate where he played a conspicious part in the development of the state. When Miss Addams was 2 years old, her mother died. There were 8 children in the family four of whom grew to maturity. As a child, she had never been strong. Throughout her life she suffered from certain physical weaknesses but she accomplished what few have ever accomplished in meeting the needs of men, women, and children.

In 1877, Miss Addams entered Rockford College, Rockford, Illinois. She received her A.B. Degree in 1881. In later years, she was granted Honorary Degrees from many colleges and universities among them Smith College, Yale University, the Universities of Wisconsin, Chicago, and California. In 1931, Bryn Mawr chose her as the recipient of the M. Carey Thomas Prize as an award "to an American Woman in Recognition of Eminent Accomplishments."

On December 7, 1887, Miss Addams sailed for Europe. While in London, she visited Toynbee Hall which had been established four years before. She was shocked by the conditions which she saw in the Whitechapel district of Toynbee Hall and greatly impressed by what Toynbee Hall was doing for those who lived in its area. Toynbee Hall was the first Settlement in the world.

Returning to this country, she decided to establish a Settlement in Chicago. Her classmate at Rockford, Ellen Gates Starr, joined her in the enterprise. Together, they searched through the needy sections of Chicago finally choosing an old house on West Halsted Street which had been the home of Charles J. Hull, an early citizen of Chicago. The house was large with high ceilings with some land about it. The neighborhood was an immigrant neighborhood. The people were poor. The streets and tenements were deplorable. The Ward, the 19th, one of the most Boss-ridden in the city. Not daunted by the conditions, Miss Addams with Miss Starr opened the doors of Hull House in 1889. Thus at the age of 27 Miss Addams began her life work. For 45 years, Hull House was her home.

As was to be expected there was much curiosity as to the undertaking. Visitors descended upon Hull House. Many were won to her support. Best of all was the fact that she was soon joined by a group who were to make their mark in the civic and philanthropic history of the country, namely Julia Lathrop, the first Head of the Children's Bureau, Washington, D.C.; Florence Kelly of Consumers League fame; Dr. Alice Hamilton, a world wide authority on Occupational Disease and the first woman to become a member of the Faculty of Harvard University; Grace Abbott, the second head of the Children's Bureau and her sister, Edith Abbott, of the University of Chicago. As time went on, there came to live at Hull House such notables as Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Swope, Mackensie King, later a Prime Minister of Canada, John Dewey, Senator Paul H. Douglas. No one of lesser quality could have surrounded herself with such people. Year after year the distinguished from many countries went to Halsted Street.

In the early years of Hull House, Miss Addams personally organized clubs and classes for children and for adults. Almost immediately there was started a Nursery where the children of working mothers were cared for and an Employment Bureau. Then came a Lodging House for working girls, the famous "Jane Club." Next a Coffee House was opened where meals were served for all who asked to be served. A Boys' Club was erected and a Theatre as well as a Music School. These buildings surround the original house of red brick to form a hollow square in the center of which is an open Courtyard. Much more could be said about the educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities which Hull House offered for Miss Addams believed in the best for the lowliest.

Hull House was always overflowing with people from the neighborhood. It was a never to be forgotten sight to see Miss Addams in the midst of the groups. Often she would be found sitting in the entrance hall surrounded by chil-

dren or talking to someone who had come in to pass the "time of day".

Besides looking after the activities that went on within the walls of Hull House, much time was spent in visiting the families, in looking after the sick, and in checking the condition of the houses and streets. So shocked was she by the conditions, that she became an early advocate of Housing Codes. She succeeded, moreover, in getting herself appointed as a Supervisor of Garbage Collection, a position which she held for 3 years, to show what could be done. She also fought the liquor, gambling and immoral situation that existed. Naturally, she antagonized the political forces. The Press turned against her. Nevertheless, she kept valiantly on. Further, Miss Addams brought into being the first Juvenile Court in America. The Immigrant Aid Association which she sponsored became a pattern for help to the Foreign Born. This from her early years.

Later, she saw that the pressures to which those who lived about her were subjected could only be lessened by Law, so she swung into Legislative action. Miss Addams had the moral force and vision to lay the foundation of much of the legal rulings we live under today. She helped to make Sweatshops illegal. She fought against Child Labor. She was in the forefront in bringing about the inspection of factories and the inspection of tenements. One of her most telling successes was the Illinois Law which limited the hours for women workers to 8 hours a day. This was the first such law to be passed; a law which has since become embedded in the statutes of many of our states. She also stood for Workmen's Compensation and for Old Age Pensions, now a basic part of the National Social Security Law. As she had been vilified by the politicians earlier, she now was cried down by the exploiting economic interests. Nevertheless, she never ceased to advocate that which would better the economic condition of the masses.

As a speaker, Miss Addams was telling. She prepared her lectures carefully. She was sure of her facts. Her voice was gentle, unaffected. She was never sentimental. Her phraseology was simple. It is hard to express her effect on an audience—an effect which came from her inner self.

The books she wrote carry something of the quality of her speaking. The significance and poesy of the titles are rare even on the part of the finest of writers. Note "The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets"; "The Long Road to Woman's Memory" (a pro po of Suffrage); "The Excellent Becomes the Permanent"; "Newer Ideals of Peace"; "Democracy and Social Ethics"; "A New Conscience and the Social Evil". "Twenty Years at Hull House" as well as "The Second Twenty Years at Hull House" are autobiographical. Her Julia Lathrop Biography was a tribute to her associate in the early years of Hull House. Then there is "Hull House Maps and Papers" which gives evidence of a scholarly mind.

During the last 25 years of her life, Miss Addams gave herself unstintingly to the cause of disarmament and Peace. She made trips to Europe and to Asia to plead with many groups and heads of government for greater understanding among nations. She was prominent at the first National Peace Congress held in 1907 in Washington, D.C. when the then Governor of New York, Charles Evans Hughes, and Elihu Root and Edward Everett Hale were among the speakers. In 1908, the Second Peace Congress assembled in Chicago when President Taft and Miss Addams were chief speakers. In 1912, she joined the Progressive Party believing deeply in the stand which President Theodore Roosevelt took for using the World Court at the Hague as the center for the Arbitration of international disputes.

Came World War I. Up to World War I, Miss Addams had been applauded for her philosophy but when she wrote and lectured against the United States entering the War, she was anathematized by the Press because of her stand and many a supporter turned against her. Deeply hurt as she was, she did not cease to keep the goal of Peace before the public. She was derisively called a "Pacifist." She never was a Pacifist in the inner meaning of that term for when the war started, she stood by her country.

In 1915, Miss Addams founded "The Internanational League for Peace and Freedom" in the hope that the women of the world would unite to do everything possible to prevent war. She headed the League until 1929. There were many meetings of the League, both here and abroad, with Disarmament and Peace the chief objective. Whether Miss Addams would have sailed on the Peace Shop of Henry Ford, no one knows as she was ill in the Presbyterian Hospital in Chicago. When the League of Nations came into being, she was hopeful that the world had come to recognize the horror and ineffectiveness of War. When the League failed, she worked for her International League for Peace and Freedom

harder than ever, traveling, traveling, speaking, speaking. Gradually, her motives came to be understood and applauded. In 1931, she receiv- the Nobel Peace Prize with Nicolas Murray Butler, then President of Columbia University. The day after she was formally notified of the award, she was operated on; an operation from which she never fully recovered. Therefore, the gold medal and diploma were received in her name by the American Minister in Oslo. The representative of the Nobel interests in his speech of honor said, " . . . When the need was greatest, she made the American woman's desire for peace an international interest. . . . She clung to her idealism in the difficult period when other demands and interests overshadowed peace." The $16,000 that came with the Nobel Prize, Miss Addams donated to the International League for Peace and Freedom. She was the first woman to be given the Prize.

After her operation, she became infirm but she was mentally vigorous. Shortly after she left the hospital, she began the biography, "My Friend Julia Lathrop" and finished it. She also went back to Hull House.

In 1933, Miss Addams was made the honorary President of the World Fellowship of Faiths. Her religion? She was not a sectarian. She had sad that religion should be spiritually dynamic, not a consolation for personal salvation. Her background was that of a Quaker.

Although her friends tried to check her, she insisted on entering into the activites of Hull House. The end came May 21st, 1935. The services were held in the central court of Hull House which was filled with people who were there to pay her homage. They were from all walks of life. The street were lined with those who stood silently for the cortege to pass. The little shops and restaurants were draped in mourning. Miss Addams was buried in Cedarville, Illinois, where she was born.

At the time of the 20th anniversary of the founding of the International League for Peace and Freedom, a dinner was given in Washington, D.C. in honor of Miss Addams. At that dinner Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "It is for being yourself that I thank you tonight. When the day comes when difficulties are faced and settled without resorting to the type of waste which war has always meant, we shall look back in this country upon the leadership you have given and be grateful for having you living with us." On that same occasion, Secretary Ickes paid this tribute to her. "Parents who want to develop the finest in their children will bring them up in the Jane Addams traditions and those so raised will be the best citizens of their generation, — steadfast, neighborly, serene, and simple, crusaders in the never ending fight for a finer and better social order."

From Walter Lippmann at the time of her death, "No one will ever be able to put into words the whole long record of the goodness of Jane Addams. There is no way to count the human beings whom she helped or to measure their benefits."

The Centennial of the birth of Jane Addams is being celebrated in this year of 1960 in many communities in these United States and in many other countries as well. She belonged to us but also to others. Her influence will permeate the Future.

Why Christmas Came

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addressing his thought to the theme of this sermon, but when I chose to discuss Why Christmas Came I was drawn to his insight of God's mysterious ways. Doctor Schweitzer, mindful of the mystery that attends any discussion of God's reality and purpose, and aware of the paradoxes that nature's laws and divine love present, tried to bridge the impasse in these words. He wrote: "Let me express it in a simile. There is an ocean —cold water without motion. In the ocean, is the Gulf Stream, flowing from the Equator to the Pole. Inquire of all scientists how it is physically imaginable that a stream of hot water flows between the waters of the ocean, which, so to speak, form its banks, the moving within the motionless, the hot within the cold: no scientist can explain it. Similarly, there is the God of love, within the God of the forces of the universe—one with Him, and yet so totally different. We let ourselves be seized and carried away by that vital stream."

The deepest answer to Why Christmas Came is here expressed. Jesus let the stream of God's love seize and carry him away, and in so doing he became the Christ of history.

Christmas has come. Jesus' revelation is a fact. He would desire nothing more of us than that we, too, may master his art and let the stream of God's love make us Christlike.

Light and Darkness

Charles C. Forman

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. —John 1:5.

Matthew and Luke begin their Gospels with stories of the birth of Jesus: The contrast, then, between these Gospels and the fourth Gospel is marked. John's lovely Gospel, to be sure, has as its central theme, Jesus who is the Christ, but there are no birth stories. Yet, John begins, quite as logically as do the others, with the coming of Jesus into the world. What he seems to do is to push aside the traditional accounts of the birth, and move directly to the point. He tells us immediately in what manner he, John, understands the event we celebrate on Christmas. He begins his Gospel, then, with an interpretation, a philosophical explanation, of the advent of Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

An outmoded type of biblical scholarship once found great significance in parallel situations or symbols between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The one was taken as an introduction to, or preparation for, the other. Thus, the Old Testament could be compared to the Gospel of John when Genesis begins with darkness and emptiness until God said: "Let there be light; and there was light." So John sees a great void until it is filled by Christ who is the 'light of the world". In him we have a new Adam, a new creation, and a life that was and is the light of mankind.

The use of light and darkness as symbolic of the opposing forces of good and evil is familiar. One recalls that this conflict or duality was the basis of Zoroaster's concept of religion, formulated eight centuries before the Christian era. According to Zoroaster there were two deities: Ahura Mazda, the good God, the God of light, was constantly engaged in a life and death struggle against Ahriman, the evil deity of darkness.

Matthew and Luke make use of the symbol of light when they set about to tell the Christmas story. Matthew has a star, penetrating the darkness of the night sky, and, indeed, of the world, itself, as it leads the Magi to the manger cradle. Luke has a light shining in the darkness that announces to the shepherds the presence of an angel who tells them the glad tidings of that wonderful night. So we put candles in our windows to give evidence of the festival we keep in our hearts at Christmastide. How completely right was that vision of Isaiah looking into the future when God would at last establish in Israel the awaiting Messiah:

> The people who walked in darkness
> have seen a great light;
>
> Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
> on them has light shined.

It was indeed a moment of affirmation of the profoundest sort when the author of the fourth Gospel, with Isaiah's world ringing in his ears, looked back in retrospect at the life of Jesus of Nazareth and declared that he was in truth the "great light." So John proclaims his coming: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

How is it that Christ is the light of the world? In what way does the description fit him? Orthodox theology answers that question by the doctrine of the Incarnation, according to which God took upon himself the form of flesh and blood and came into the world by causing himself to be conceived in the womb of Mary. Thus the child was called Immanuel, the Hebrew for "God with us". The point of the doctrine of the Incarnation is this: God redeemed his creation by disguising himself in human form to come into the world in order to work its salvation.

Now, even though confessional forms of Christianity are committed to a formal acceptance of this doctrine, for the vast majority of Christians, and especially liberal Christians, the Incarnation presents more difficulties than it solves. We do not, of course, believe that God ever entered the world in the form of flesh and blood in any *narrow* and *restricted* sense. And yet there is some truth here: Jesus Christ has *more fully* reflected the light of God than any

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Ethics and Faith

Karel V. Vit

Among the many definitions of ethics we find: "The science of ideal human character and conduct;" "a study of good and evil and man's attitude toward them;" "a search for standards of behavior among human beings and the art of living together;" "a quest for a way of life."

Perhaps it can be best illustrated by confronting, as Dr. Kresge of Marshall College did, ethics with allied sciences, like psychology or sociology:

"A psychologist makes a study of *why* human beings behave the way they behave. A student of ethics wants to determine or find our *how* man *ought* to behave.

"A sociologist makes a study of the origin and nature of human institutions, what they are and how they came into being—whilst a 'moral philosopher' speaks of these societies as they ought to be."

It is in this setting up of norms or standards of what human conduct ought to be that ethics are so closely related to religion.

However, there is a difference between the two: While ethics is concerned with individuals and societies *here,* in the present under given conditions and circumstances, religion goes beyond the present and makes its most serious concern the problem of the *ultimate destiny* of man.

Thus a person may act morally and yet not be religious at all. On the other hand, a person may be religious and yet behave immorally or amorally in terms of his own contemporary society. Or he may retire from society altogether and isolate himself in seclusion to contemplate his Creator and destiny with complete disregard for those interpersonal relationships which are involved in morality. Such a person would certainly be religious, but his ethics would be practically nonexistent, since there would be no one to apply them to.

Thus it is conceivable that there could be a religion without ethics, and of course there could be ethics without religion.

However, we have become quite accustomed to judging the value of religion by its *ethical* concepts and norms and we do not consider a religion without ethics to be a religion of a higher type. In our type of society we measure man's religious faith by its ethical reflections in his environment. This is the influence of Judeo-Christian religious tradition in our way of thinking. "Faith without deeds is dead," said the apostle, and of course he meant "right" or "good" deeds.

And it is in these "deeds"—"ethics" that the various religious faiths differ most, if we leave out the various concepts of Divinity, or God.

What are the "right" or "good" deeds and behaviour and what are the "wrong" or "evil" ones?

What is the measure of their correctness or wrongness, of their goodness or evilness?

Is there any such thing as "good" or "evil," "right" or "wrong" equally considered as such by everyone, anywhere at any time? In other words, is there an *absolute* good and evil equally binding for anyone under all circumstances or are the the concepts or right and wrong relative to other conditions in which man finds himself in his pilgrimage through time?

Depending on the view we take, we divide ethics broadly into two great categories: absolute ethics and relative ethics, or authoritarian and humanistic ethics, or universal and socially imminent ethics, or objectivistic and subjectivistic ethics.

I think that the difference between these two poles of our approach to the problem of ethics can be best understood and illustrated in the case of authoritarian versus humanistic ethics.

In authoritarian ethics an authority states what is good for man and lays down the laws and norms of conduct. In humanistic ethics man himself is both the norm-giver and the subject of the norms, their formal source or regulative agency and their subject matter.

Both these types are very realistically represented in our society and reflect in our philosophy, sociology, economy and politics. The roots of our present East-West ideological conflict with all its consequence are in these two opposing views.

We are tempted to reject the idea of *authoritarian* ethics because of what the name implies. It brings up in our minds the superficial synonymity between authority and dictatorship or totalitarianism.

But let us consider what authority can be and mean. It may be rational and voluntarily ac-

cepted or it may be irrational and imposed on us by various shades of fear or terror, or other means of pressure and coercion.

Obviously all religious ethics are authoritarian of both types, rational and irrational.

In a Jewish reader, *In Time and Eternity* edited by Nahum N. Glatzer (Schocken Books, New York, 1946) you have a good example of the irrational sort of authoritarian religious ethics that are so typical of the Old Testament:

"Once Susia prayed to God: 'Lord, I love you so much, but I do not fear you enough. Let me stand in awe of you as one of your angels, who are penetrated by your awe-filled name.'

"And God heard his prayer, and His name penetrated the hidden heart of Susia, as it comes to pass with the angels. But at that Susia crawled under the bed like a little dog, and animal fear shook him until he howled: 'Lord, let me love you like Susia again.' And God heard him this time also."

Now Susia would love God and do his will as he has been told to do without ever rebelling again, without wanting to know the real presence of the Lord again. He will go on and obey the Ten Commandments with their "Thou shalts" and "Thou shalt nots" and never ask *why*. His awe and fear of God will keep him in place for the rest of his life. Inquisitiveness, curiosity or criticism of authority is not only forbidden, but punished.

God wants Susia to do his will, but does not want him to know Him; but for this there is no rational reason given.

There are times and circumstances, and people, that have this sort of authoritarian ethics to keep society in order, but not on the *upward* way. An irrational authority usually leads to destruction. Examples in quite recent history are Hitler and Mussolini.

However, authority can be rational, and then it not only invites, but requires criticism, opposition and discussion.

Dr. Erich Fromm in his book *Man For Himself* sees rational authority as having its source in competence. He says: "The person whose authority is respected (not feared) functions competently in the task with which he is entrusted by those who conferred it upon him. He need not intimidate them nor arouse their admiration by magic qualities; as long as, and to the extent to which he is competently helping, instead of exploiting, his authority is based on rational grounds and does not call for irrational awe."

In religion authoritarian ethics and their measure of what is good, are based on a Divine power transcending man, a power which is *a priori*, and has created certain absolute values which cannot be changed by man and often may not even be questioned. In any case *religious* ethics are what we could call "theocentric."

On the other extreme we find ethics that are "anthropocentric" in which man is the measure of all things. The humanistic positon is that there is nothing higher and nothing more dignified than human existence. *Good* in humanistic ethics is the affirmation of life, the unfolding of man's powers. *Virtue* is responsibility toward his own existence. *Evil* constitutes the crippling of man's powers and *vice* is irresponsibility toward himself.

Against this position it has been argued that it is in the very nature of *ethical behavior* to be *related* to something *trascending* man and hence that a system which recognizes man and his interest alone cannot be truly moral, that its object would be merely the isolated. egotistical individual.

Be that as it may, humanistic ethics cannot only be, but are, without any religious connection. A humanist does not need or require God and His law to tell him what he ought to do. This does not exclude religious faith, but it would not be a faith in a God living with His world, but rather a divine power that *might have created* but does not *any more interfere* with its creation and has somehow lost interest in it.

Thus we may have a man who believes in the exstence of God and behaves "well," but is not "religious." He believes, but has no *faith* or *trust* in God, which are essential elements in any religion.

My belief is that ethics—as a quest for a way of life and a search for the way which Man ought to go—have to be based on religious faith to be universally acceptable. I can go along with a humanist only to a certain degree. There are some values which are subjective, relative, determined by man in a given time and society, but these are of temporary character, of limited duration, subject to change according to man's growth and experience. But there are also values which are permanent, nonchanging and nonchangeable and binding at all times and places—the "insrinsic" values.

In this respect I consider myself a Kantian idealist, since I find his "categorical imperative" the measure of intrinsic values: "Act so as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never

as a means only." If you act this way, you'll always act "good." This is not an irrational order of a dictatorial divine power, but a rational requirement, condition of correct, good and just behavior. In giving us the power of reasoning, which leads to the categorical imperative, the Creator has once for all shown His lasting interest in His universe. We were given Reason for the purpose of inquiring into the Creator's ways. He does not *reject* our search, but encourages it, since it is the purpose of our life. Divine authority cannot be irrational, since irrationality is imperfection which is a quality perfection cannot possess.

It seems to me rather that blind obedience as required by some churches is contrary to God's will and at the same time degrading. It may *have* to be required under certain circumstances and at certain phases of evolution or the growing-up process as the only way to prevent evil, but it should never become a permanent requirement of correct behavior. Every effort should be made to justify it rationally.

This concept of rational authority is the basis of democracy. Any other ethics would undermine the roots of it and make its existence impossible.

It is therefore quite natural that a religious faith like that of Jefferson should have become fundamental to the way of life in this country, and although formally still only a faith of a minority, it is the cornerstone upon which our society rests.

God is that which is rational—and rational is divine. Eliminate reason from religion and you have debased it. Eliminate rationality from ethics and you have created a fear and tyranny, and these cannot possibly be the ultimate destiny of man.

Religious faith and ethics belong together; they should supplement each other. When they do we have a balanced man who will face his destiny—whatever it may be—with courage, hope and joy. We'll have a happy man in a happy world in a happy universe—and this is the task of both religion and ethics. And it is in our power to achieve.

Editorial

(*Continued from page* 2)

the same events or even the same religious attitudes that Christmas does. The common symbol of light alone offers an extremely superficial resemblance between them. 2. We do well to honor great men, but many of these men have their own birthdays, and the historical intent of Christmas is to celebrate Christ's birth. 3. We should always understand the origins of our Christmas customs, but we should at the same time realize that Christmas is much more than a collection of customs, just as any whole is more than the arithmetical sum of its part. 4. And, finally, God knows, we should and do greet the arrival of a child with reverence, humility and profound thankfulness. But let us not imagine him a potential Christ child. Rather let us love our children for what they are and not for what we would like them to be. Let us honor them on their own birthdays, as well as each day of the year.

Let us love our children. Let us study our Christmas origins. Let us praise famous men. Let us study and know the holidays of our religious neighbors. But let us not try to do all this on the same day, and certainly not on December 25th. We might never get around to celebrating Christmas.

—Carl R. Scovel

A Prayer at Christmastime

Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this season of the year when we are more ready to respond to Thy love which comes to us with such tenderness and grace. . . . The touch of the Christmas spirit comes upon us and takes us out of ourselves, makes us ready to give, to share, eager to make happy and joyful — not ourselves but others. We know it is the Spirit of Christ Himself that makes us thus. May it control all our thoughts and wishes, our words and deeds, and pervade all our life so that we may celebrate Christmas in the deepest, truest sense. But we pray for more, that we may have this Spirit of Christ all through the year, that He may be in the center of our lives and not we ourselves. And may Thy gracious love so work through us, and Thy holy Spirit so use us day by day, that we may become co-workers with Thee in Thy great work of redemption, so that we may have our share in making men and institutions more Christlike and more ready for Thy rule.

—Julius August Brewer

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Light and Darkness

(Continued from page 8)

other person of whom we have any knowledge. He it was, and is, who fairly pierces the darkness of the world with the radiance of God. He is like us in kind, and yet how far he *exceeds* us *in degree!* He is the brightest light the world has ever known.

As we move through the weeks of the Advent season and think again of the mysteries toward which the symbols of Christmas beg our attention we put the ultimate question. Will the light *ever* be overcome by the darkness? We have seen too much to find it difficult to believe that there could be a world where men and women had forgotten the brilliance of that light that came to us once long ago. In our greed and selfishness and pursuit for a brilliance that tarnishes too quickly we *could* forget. The light *might* perish as though it had never been. But darkness has no power of itself. There is no inherent quality in the darkness that is able to extinguish the light.

Wherever there is self-sacrifice and generous living; wherever men and women live by principles and hold to ideals; wherever love and courage and faith are nurtured and conscience is supreme, the light is still shining in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

There is a poem of Celia Thaxter's describing the wreck of the Pocahontus. She had lit the lighthouse lamp in the face of a storm, and then there was nothing to do but wait and hope. Fnally, the storm passed, and at last there was a visitor from Portsmouth. In spite of the light the Pocahontus had gone down in the storm and all members of the crew were lost. And then the poet asks herself the question that sooner or later is Everyman's question. "What's the use?" In our poor dark, confused world we could put that question. But Celia Thaxter wrote a final stanza:

Sighing I climbed the lighthouse stair
Half forgetting my grief and pain;
And while the day died, sweet and fair,
I lit the lamps again.

For those of us who still believe in Christmas, and who love light rather than darkness, tthere is only one task; it is to light the lamps again. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

. . . Of all the old festivals, that of Christmas awakens the strongest and most heartfelt associations. It is, indeed the season of regenerated feelings.

—Washington Irving

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